

Inspection of a good school: St Benedict's Catholic Primary School

Hall Road, Handforth, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 3AE

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2022

Outcome

St Benedict's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like coming to this school. The pupils who spoke to the inspector said that their teachers make learning fun and that they make good friends. They are keen to live up to the high expectations that leaders have for their learning and behaviour. Pupils behave well and try their best in lessons.

Pupils treat one another with respect. Some older pupils act as diversity defenders who help other pupils understand the importance of respect and tolerance. Pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities, such as leading assemblies on how to behave in school and how to cooperate well with others.

Pupils have a range of activities available to them at breaktimes. This makes playtimes fun and purposeful. They enjoy the wide variety of clubs on offer including robotics, Spanish and computing and the numerous sporting clubs.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. Pupils know that bullying is not tolerated in school and that staff deal with any incidents swiftly and decisively. They appreciate the way that their teachers help them and look after them. A typical comment from parents and carers was that the school has a 'wonderful culture of respect, caring and kindness'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. They have created an ambitious curriculum which starts in the early years. The curriculum is organised so that new learning builds on what pupils already know. Leaders link pupils' learning to the local area as much as possible so that it is relevant and enjoyable.

In most subjects, leaders have set out the curriculum to clearly define the knowledge and skills to be taught in each year group. Teachers have good subject knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They explain subject content clearly so that pupils understand and know what to do.

In most subjects, teachers successfully revisit prior learning regularly to check that pupils remember what they have been taught in the past. Pupils use their prior knowledge well to help them to make connections with their current learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 demonstrated a sound understanding of the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods and how these different periods in time relate to one another. As a result, pupils progress well through most areas of the curriculum. They achieve well by the end of key stage 2.

Some younger pupils in key stage 1, however, are less secure in the knowledge that they have been taught. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, some pupils have missed out on key aspects of the early years curriculum that are essential to unlocking their future success in key stage 1. They have not sufficiently caught up. For example, younger pupils are less able to record their ideas, findings or answers in a clear and legible way.

All pupils access the full and rich curriculum. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are accurately identified. Learning is successfully adapted for these pupils, including those with more complex needs. Well-trained teaching assistants support pupils' speech, language and communication and their wider development.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They have invested in new reading books and training so that all staff know how to teach pupils to read. Staff in the Reception class deliver the early reading curriculum well. Pupils' reading books match the sounds that they know. Pupils who need support get the extra help they need to become fluent and confident readers.

Pupils in key stage 2 build on the strong start that they make in reading. Teachers show pupils how to answer questions about the books that they read and how to explain their answers using appropriate vocabulary. Engaging reading areas and books linked to class topics cultivate a love of reading so that pupils read widely and often. They enjoy their dedicated reading time in school. Pupils said that this helps them to become better readers.

Pupils apply themselves well in lessons. They listen carefully and are quick to engage in discussion and activity when prompted. Pupils demonstrate a sound awareness of diversity and understand the importance of respect for faiths, feelings and values that are different to their own.

Governors know the school very well. They offer effective challenge and support to school leaders. Together with leaders, they supported families well during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They know that leaders value them and that they are mindful of their workload and supportive of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make keeping pupils safe a priority. They have made sure that all staff are well-trained so that they know how to identify and report any issues of abuse including neglect.

Staff know pupils and their families very well. This enables them to identify any safeguarding concerns quickly. Leaders work well with local agencies to get families the help that they need.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe including online. They learn about keeping safe in lessons and in assemblies. Pupils said that there is always someone to talk to if they are worried.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are some aspects of the early years curriculum that have not been covered in sufficient depth. As a result, some younger pupils in key stage 1 have not gained the key knowledge and skills that they need to flourish. Leaders should ensure that pupils have the opportunity to make up for the gaps in their development so that they can make the most of the key stage 1 curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111323
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10199973
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lucy Maudsley
Headteacher	Hannah McGuire
Website	https://stbenedicts.cheshire.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	13 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. There is also a new chair of the governing body.
- School leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The governing body is responsible for the before- and after-school provision in the school building.
- The school received its most recent section 48 inspection in November 2016.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their work and school life. He spoke with members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders and members of staff. He also met with parents in the playground after school.

- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including information about safeguarding and checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. The inspector also spoke to staff about safeguarding and about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and responses to Ofsted's online survey of school staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school, in class, in the dining hall and in the outdoor play areas.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, met with teachers and spoke with pupils. The inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Craig Richardson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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